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ABSTRACT

The essential nature of political structures of developing nations appears to generate an opposition to criticism. Since most of the developing nations see no alternative but to regard freedom of the press as an antithesis to industrial development, many such nations suppress press freedom. The relationship between developmental efforts and curtailment of press freedom can be observed in the degree of subsystem autonomy rather than the economic indices. A taxonomy of press freedom developed according to the political systems is referred to as "Mobilized Modern Systems with High Differentiation and Secularization" and "Premobilized Modern Systems with Limited Differentiation and Secularization." Developing nations fall under the second category and all other nations under the first. In analyzing subsystem autonomy, data reflect that if societal differentiation is high, the press is most likely to be free and vice versa. (DS)

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Freedom of the Press As A Function of Subsystem Autonomy and As An Antithesis of Development

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Recent events in the Philippines, Korea and other developing nations seem to suggest that press freedom is a precarious commodity that can be slaughtered on the altar of national (economic) development. The purpose of this article is to explain the relationship between the developmental efforts of the governments and curtailment of press freedom in developing nations. At the same time it is an effort to show that political structure, more specifically degree of subsystem autonomy is a better indicator of the press freedom than the economic indices.

In this paper, freedom of the press means freedom of the media to engage in the adversary role, being a vigilant and independent watchdog of the government, free to criticize the policies and personnel of the power elite without fear of arbitrary sanction. Development will signify economic development through rapid industrialization. By subsystem autonomy we mean structurally and functionally differentiated subsystem (political parties, pressure groups, the press, courts and the like) enjoying relative autonomy or independent sphere of influence vis a vis the government or the party in power.

In trying to find generalizable propositions which may contribute toward prediction of the degree of the press freedom in any country, politics emerges as the key variable. Gabriel Almond's notion of subsystem autonomy is helpful here. If we take the view of the systems theory in which a country would be a political system with many subsystems within it,

the press can be conceptualized as a subsystem of the political system. Opposition parties, labor unions, different interest groupings and others are also construed as subsystems.

When all these subsystems enjoy relative autonomy in the political process, that is, participating in the interest articulation and aggregation aspects of the political process, we can expect the press as a subsystem to reflect this relative autonomy in reporting and commenting on the activities of these various subsystems. However, in the case of the Communist or other totalitarian countries and the dominant one-party states, we can not find viable and autonomous subsystems actively engaged in the political process. These subsystems are structurally differentiated but not functionally. In other words, they are functionally amalgamated under the dictator or the party. The press in those countries, thus, can be said to have been deprived of the source materials which make the usual stuff of newspaper content in the free press countries. In a fundamental sense, the press does reflect its own environment or the society.

In short, the degree of functional differentiation as well as of subsystem autonomy will tell us more about the status of freedom of the press than economic development indices. We can establish a taxonomy of press freedom according to the different political systems. The types of political systems are borrowed from Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach by Almond and Powell.[1]

(A) Mobilized Modern Systems--High Differentiation and Secularization

1) Democratic Systems: Subsystem Autonomy and Participant Culture

a) High Subsystem Autonomy (Britain)

b) Limited Subsystem Autonomy (Fourth Republic France)

c) Low Subsystem Autonomy (Mexico)

2) Authoritarian Systems--Subsystem Control and Subject Participant Culture

a) Radical Totaritarian (U.S.S.R.)

b) Conservative Totalitarian (Nazi Germany)

c) Conservative Authoritarian (Spain)

d) Modernizing Authoritarian (Brazil)

(B) Premobilized Modern Systems--Limited Differentiation and Secularization

1) Premobilized Authoritarian (Ghana)

2) Premobilized Democratic (Nigeria prior to January 1966)

As it is implicit even from the above classification of political systems, the modernization or development is the unquestioned goal of every developing country. An extremely important question to ask at this juncture is: Is freedom of the press compatible with the development?

First, it should be noted that the relationship between the mass media and the development fascinated a number of researchers.[2] One of their basic assumptions is that mass communication is both an agent and an index of change. That the development in the media sector provide an index of the development in other sectors of the society is easy to understand. However, a problem arises if we push the idea that mass communication serve as an agent of the development

too far. In order to serve as an agent, the media are asked to assume the role of the teacher to aid the developmental efforts of the government. However, it is hard to conceive the function of the mass media, especially the privately owned printed media, in such a manner. In some aspects, of course, they may act as teachers, but not usually in a conscious or planned manner. In fact, the only countries closely approximating the theorists' conception of the media functions in development are totalitarian, Communist or otherwise, countries. There the media move as planned, systematically to aid the development process as teachers, inspirers, propagandizers and agitators of the masses.

Commitment to development underwrites strong administration and quick action. Whereas political leaders in developing nations today face simultaneous, overburdening inputs into their political system, they don't enjoy the benefit of incremental development which was the fortunate fate of, say, the United Kingdom and the United States which had developed over the many years. The political leadership in a developing country somehow has to telescope the gamut of modernized society. The demand for quick industrialization and development is urgent. In this context, they can hardly tolerate critics and gadflies which are regarded as impediments or barriers in development. So the argument might run in the minds of the ruling elite.

In short, when the development is apotheosized, there could be not much room for freedom of the press which is the antithesis to the planned nature of the developmental

effort. In fact, developmental politics seems to be an antithesis of democracy, of deliberation and long-winded decision-making process.

Hypothesis and Procedures

From the above observations, two hypotheses emerge: first, that freedom of the press is a function of subsystem autonomy and second, that freedom of the press is not compatible with the developmental efforts of the government. To test those hypotheses, we collected data for a total of 110 countries. Since the authors were unable to find a suitable indicator of subsystem autonomy, societal differentiation index (Marsh) and political competition index (Banks) were used as a substitute. A paradigm on the hypothesized relationships among press freedom, societal differentiation and subsystem autonomy looks like this:

		Subsystem Autonomy	
		Low	High
Societal Differentiation	Low	press least free	intermediate
	High	intermediate	press most free

Fuller explanation will follow. The number of countries involved in different analyses varies because some countries lack data on either one or two variables.

Data used in this analysis are not up to date. The latest data are as of 1966 and the oldest data as of late '50s. Instead of making necessary indices of our own, it was decided to use the indices already made by others. It is assumed that there has not been a big change in an overall picture of the world situation concerning the press freedom since early

or mid 1960s.

INDICES USED IN THE ANALYSIS (key definitions are italicized):

* Nixon's Press Freedom Index: (based on data as of mid 1960s)
from Raymond B. Nixon, "Freedom in the World's Press: A Fresh Appraisal with New Data," Journalism Quarterly, Winter, 1965, pp. 3-14. see p. 6.
For his 1965 study Nixon constructed for 117 countries a 9 point numerical scale of press freedom, ranging from "free press system" (score 1) to "controlled press system" (score 9).
In the present paper, however, the scoring is reversed in order to avoid a scoring system conflicting with those of other indices. The countries with the least free press are given score 1 and the countries having the most free press score 9. In other words, a bigger score means more press freedom in the present paper.

* Banks and Textor's Press Freedom Index: (based on data as of early 1960s)
from Arthur S. Banks and Robert B. Textor, A Cross-Polity Survey, the M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1963, pp. 67-68, Appendicies A and B.
Banks and Textor grouped the countries into four on the basis of the degree of press control: the countries with the press freedom "complete,""intermittent," "internally absent," and "internally and externally absent."
In the present paper score 1 is given to the countries where the press freedom is "internally absent," and

score 4 to the countries with "complete" press freedom. Here also a bigger score indicates more press freedom.

*Lowenstein's Press Freedom Index: (based on data as of mid 1960s)

from Ralph L. Lowenstein, "Press Freedom as a Political Indicator?" in Heinz-Dietrich Fischer and John Calhoun Merrill, (eds.) International Communication, Hasting House, New York, 1970, pp. 129-140. See pp. 136-137.

Lowenstein classified the countries into seven groups on the basis of "press independence and critical ability": the countries with the press "controlled-high degree" to the countries with the press "free-high degree."

In the present paper a bigger score is given to the countries with most free press. The score ranges from 1 to 7.

*Farace's National Development Index: (based on data as of mid 1960s)

from R. Vincent Farace, "A study of Mass Communication and National Development," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 43, summer 1966, pp. 305-313. See pp. 311-312.

Farace used 54 variables believed to be indicative of "national development" and classified 109 countries into nine groups on the basis of the range of standard scores. The scores range from -0.81 of the least development to 4.34 of the most development.

For the present paper score 1 is given to the countries least developed (standard score ranging -1.00 to -0.50)

and score 9 to the countries most developed (standard score 3.01 and above). In other words a bigger score indicates more development.

Farace's index is a little bit contaminated because a variable concerning press control is included in his constructing "national development index." But the contamination effect is assumed to be negligible under the aggregate effect of the other 53 variables included in the index construction.

* Marsh's Societal Differentiation Index: (based on data as of late 1950s)

from Robert M. Marsh, Comparative Sociology, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. New York, 1967. See Appendices, especially pp. 334-335 and 366-374.

Marsh calculated his Societal Differentiation Index Scores for 114 countries on the basis of standardized scores converted from percentage of males in non-agricultural occupations and gross energy consumption per capita.

In the present paper a rescoring is made to give score 1 to Marsh's score 0 to 10, score 2 to Marsh's score 11 to 20,.....,score 8 to Marsh's score 71-80, and score 9 to Marsh's score 81 or above. In other words a bigger score means a high societal differentiation.

* Banks' Political Competition Index: (based on data as of mid 1960s)

from Arthur S. Banks, Cross-Polity Times-Series Data,

the M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1971. See pp. xxiii and 283-295.

Banks summed the ordinal scores of four political competition variables (effectiveness of legislature, nomination process, legislative coalitions, and party legitimacy) and constructed an aggregate (political) competition index. His aggregate competition index scores range from 0 to 11 but in the present paper a slight modification is made to fit Banks' score into a 9 point scale.

Score 1 is given to Banks' score 0-2, score 2 to Banks' score 3,...., score 8 to Banks' score 9 and score 9 to Banks' score 10-11.

A higher score indicates a higher degree of political competitiveness.

* Combined Marsh-Banks' Index:

Rescored Marsh and Banks indices are summed and divided into a 9 point combined index. A country which is the least differentiated societally and also the least competitive politically is scored 1, while other countries which are highest in terms of both dimensions are given score 9. If a country is the highest on one dimension but the lowest on the other dimension, the two scores are evened out and score 5 is given to the country.

Results

As shown in Table 1, three different Press Freedom Indices

demonstrate high degree of agreement with each other. Nixon's index shows "Gamma" correlations of 0.798 and 0.846 with Banks & Textor's and Lowenstein's indices respectively. A "Gamma" correlation of 0.782, the smallest of the three but still quite high, is obtained between Banks & Textor's and Lowenstein's indices. Nixon's and Lowenstein's indices show more agreement with each other than with Banks & Textor's index. And of the two indices Nixon's demonstrates somewhat higher degree of agreement with Banks & Textor's than Lowenstein's does.

Because it shows higher correlations with the other two indices than the other two do, Nixon's Press Freedom Index will be used in the analysis to follow.

Table 1

ZERO ORDER CORRELATION* BETWEEN PRESS FREEDOM INDICES CONSTRUCTED BY NIXON;;BANKS AND TEXTOR; AND LOWENSTEIN

	NIXON	BANKS & TEXTOR	LOWENSTEIN
NIXON	X	.798 (94)**	.846 (89)
BANKS & TEXTOR		X	.782 (79)
LOWENSTEIN			X

*The measure of association used is Gamma.

**The figure in the parenthesis is the number of countries upon which the computation is based.

In Table 2 Nixon's Press Freedom Index is correlated with Farace's Development Index, Marsh's Societal Differentiation Index, Banks' (political) Competition Index, and Combined Marsh-Banks' Index. This is done to find out which of the four explains more of the variation in press freedom. The correlations in the first column are for all countries and those in the second column are for non-Communist countries only.

When all countries are considered, the difference in press freedom degree is least explained by Farace's Development Index and most accounted for by Banks' (political) Competition Index. The Combined Marsh-Banks' Index turns out to be the second best variable to explain the differential press freedom of the countries all over the world.

But when Communist countries are excluded, the Combined Marsh-Banks' Index demonstrates the strongest "Gamma" correlation of 0.811 with the Press Freedom Index. In terms of explanatory power the Combined Marsh-Banks' Index is followed by Banks' Competition Index (0.783), Farace's Development Index (0.705), and Marsh's Societal Differentiation Index (0.693).

In other words, Table 2 seems to provide, for at least the non-Communist countries, an empirical evidence for our hypothesis that the press freedom is a function of both social structural differentiation and functional subsystem autonomy.

Table 2

MEASURE OF ASSOCIATION (GAMMA) OF NIXON'S PRESS FREEDOM INDEX WITH FARACE'S DEVELOPMENT INDEX; MARSH'S SOCIETAL DIFFERENTIATION INDEX; BANKS' AGGREGATE COMPETITIVENESS INDEX; AND COMBINED MARSH-BANKS' STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL INDEX

	All Countries	Non-Communist Countries
Farace's Development Index	0.467 (105)*	0.705 (94)
Marsh's Societal Differentiation Index	0.504 (95)	0.693 (84)
Banks' Competitiveness Index	0.819 (103)	0.783 (89)
Combined Marsh-Banks' Index	0.761 (89)=	0.811 (78)

* The figure in the parenthesis is the number of countries upon which the computation is based.

In Table 3 the countries are grouped into nine categories on the basis of Political Competition Index and Societal Differentiation Index. For both indices, scores 1-2 are classified as low, scores 3-5 as middle, and scores 5-9 as high categories. And the mean scores of Press Freedom Index are calculated for each of nine groups of the countries.

As is shown in Table 3, the press becomes freer as Political Competition Index score increases. The positive relationship between Press Freedom and Political Competitiveness holds good for all of the three groups of countries classified on the basis of Societal Differentiation Index. For the countries with "low" Societal Differentiation, the mean score

Table 3

MEAN SCORE OF PRESS FREEDOM* OF COUNTRIES
BY POLITICAL COMPETITIVENESS AND SOCIETAL DIFFERENTIATION

Societal Differentiation \ Political Competitiveness	Low (1-2)**	Middle (3-5)	High (6 or above)
Low (1-2)	3.5 (21)***	5.0 (4)	5.3 (7)
Middle (3-5)	2.9 (12)	5.1 (7)	7.4 (19)
High (6 or above)	2.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	8.8 (16)

*This score is based on Nixon's Press Freedom Score ranging from the least free of 1 to the most free of 9.

**The figure in the parenthesis is Index score.

***The figure in the parenthesis is the number of the countries falling in the category. Eighty nine countries analyzed here are those for which index data were available on all of the three variables; political competition, societal differentiation, and press freedom.

of Press Freedom goes up from 3.5, through 5.0 to 5.3 as Political Competitiveness score increases. For the countries with "intermediate" Societal Differentiation, the mean score of Press Freedom increases from 2.9 through 5.1 to 7.4 for the countries with "low", "intermediate", and "high" Political Competition. The mean score of Press Freedom jumps from 2.0 to 8.8 for the countries with "high" degree of Societal Differentiation as Political Competition Index increases.

However, Societal Differentiation shows a mixed relationship with Press Freedom when it is controlled by Political Competition Index. For the countries with "high" degree of Political Competition, Press Freedom grows as Societal Differentiation Index score increases. The mean score of Press Freedom Index records an increase of 3.5. But for the countries with "low" level of Political Competition, a negative relationship is obtained between Press Freedom and Societal Differentiation. The mean score of Press Freedom Index decreases by 1.5 as Societal Differentiation Index increases. And for the countries with "intermediate" degree of Political Competition, Societal Differentiation doesn't seem to affect the degree of Press Freedom.

The rather unexpected relationship between Societal Differentiation and Press Freedom seems to be accounted for by politico-historical factors.

Table 4 is the same as Table 3 except for replacement of the mean score of Press Freedom with the names of countries falling in each category. Cells 1 and 2 are filled mostly by Asian

Table 4

COUNTRIES AND THEIR DEGREE OF SOCIETAL DIFFERENTIATION AND POLITICAL COMPETITIVENESS

Societal Differentiation (Marsh's Index) \ Political Competitiveness (Banks' Index)	Low (1-2)		Intermediate (3-5)	High (6 or above)	
Low (1-2)	Afganistan Burma Cambodia China (mainland) Congo (Braza.) Congo (Kinsa.) Ethiopia Haiti Indonesia Jordan Liberia Libya Morocco	Nepal 1 Nigeria Saudi Arabia Sudan Thailand North Vietnam South Vietnam Syria	Guatemala 2 Korea (South) Laos Nicaragua	El Salvador 3 Honduras India Malagacy Rep. Pakistan Somali Rep. Iran	
Intermediate (3-5)	Hungary Bulgaria Cuba Ecuador Ghana Poland	Portugal 4 Rumania Spain Tunisia Egypt Iraq	Bolivia 5 Brazil Taiwan Columbia Dominican Rep. Paraguay Yugoslavia	Argentina Ceylon Chile Costa Rica Cyprus Greece Malaysia Mexico Italy Japan	Panama 6 Peru Philippines South Africa Turkey Ireland Urguay Finland Israel
High (6 or above)	Czechoslovakia Germany (East) U.S.S.R.	7	8	Australia Austria Belgium Canada Denmark France Germany (West) Iceland Luxemburg	Netherland 9 New Zealand Norway Sweden Switzerland Britain U.S.A.

and African countries, and Cells 5 and 6 chiefly by Latin American countries, Cells 4 and 7 mostly by Communist (European) countries, while Cell 9 is occupied dominantly by Western European and North American countries.

The negative relationship between Press Freedom and Societal Differentiation for the countries with "low" political competition in Table 3 is found attributable to European Communist countries amassing on the upper half of Societal Differentiation scale.

As to the second hypothesis that freedom of the press is incompatible with the developmental efforts, we tested an alternate proposition that the press is not likely to be free in the developing countries. In other words, with the exception of the Communist countries, you would have more press freedom in either the well-developed countries or under-developed countries than in developing countries, the countries in the throes of the middle stage development. Table 5 does not give a clearcut substantiation to that proposition, perhaps because there are some fortunate countries that are developing rather well without the strong commitment for development because of plentiful natural resources. The cautious conclusion to be drawn is that strong commitment to development by the political leadership is not quite compatible with the press freedom.

Table 5

MEAN SCORE OF PRESS FREEDOM OF COUNTRIES BY PER CAPITA GNP GROWTH RATE (AVERAGE FOR 1960-1969) AND GEO-POLITICAL AREAS

Growth Rate	Communist Countries	North** America & Western Europe	Latin America	Africa South of Sahara	Middle East	Asia
Low (1.9% or less)	1 (3)*	9 (1)	6.2 (13)	4.2 (12)	3.4 (5)	4.1 (9)
High (2.0 or more)	1.9 (11)	7.8 (21)	6.8 (7)	4.2 (5)	4.7 (11)	5.4 (7)

*The figure in the parenthesis is the number of the countries upon which the mean score of press freedom is computed.

**Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa are included in this category.

Conclusion and Discussion

From our analysis, it is quite clear that freedom of the press is a function of subsystem autonomy in an overall political system. As for our second proposition, a further testing will be required, but tentative evidence seems to indicate that strong developmental efforts by the ruling elite do not leave much room for press freedom.

All the foregoing does not augur well for the future of the developing countries as far as the political democracy is concerned. It seems that most developing countries will be under developmental totalitarianism of one sort or another, with little room for

political democracy. The curtailment of press freedom in developing nations is to be understood in this context. However, danger is inherent in bringing about one voice, the uniform press which would be aiding instead of hindering the developmental efforts of the government. The one voice is to be maintained under coercion. This inevitably leads to alienation of the populace, especially on the part of intellectuals who have been taught the ideals of liberal democracy. The alientation brings about frustration which may lead to uprising to overthrow the government. The result, if successful, will be chaos and, if unsuccessful, will bring more repression. Therein lies the tragedy of the developing countries.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gabriel Almond and Bingham G. Powell, Comparative Politics; A Developmental Approach, Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1966, p. 256.
2. For an excellent bibliography on the role of mass communication in national development, see Schramm, Mass Media and National Development, Stanford University Press, 1964.